

To The LYME REGIS BOROUGH COUNCIL.

Gentlemen,

I beg to present to you my Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary Condition of the Borough for the year 1925.

I. NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA

1. GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area (acres) 1,237.
Population (Census 1921) 2,277 (Estimated, 1925) 2,299
Number of inhabited houses (1921) 450 (approx.)
" " families or separate occupiers 500 (approx.)
Rateable value £12,060.
Sum represented by a penny rate £45.

2. PHYSICAL FEATURES.

The town is situated on the slopes of the hills to the E. and W. of the River Lym, the greater part being on the western side. The climate is mild, and the lower parts of the town are well protected from the N. winds. The rainfall varies from 30 to 40 inches per annum.

3. VITAL STATISTICS.

Births.—Legitimate, Male 15, Female 14, Total 29
Illegitimate—None.
Birth-rate, 12.2 per 1,000 of the population.
Average birth-rate for the last five years 16.6.
Birth-rate, England and Wales, 1925, for comparison 18.3.
Deaths.—Male 9, Female 11, Total 20.
Death-rate, 8.7 per 1,000 of the population.
Average death-rate for the last three years 12.2.
Death-rate, England and Wales, 1925, for comparison 12.2.
No. of women dying in, or in consequence of, childbirth, 0
Deaths of infants under one year of age, 1.
Deaths from measles (all ages), 0.
Deaths from whooping-cough (all ages), 0.
Deaths from diarrhoea (under 2 years of age), 0.

4. POOR LAW RELIEF.

This is administered from Axminster. The number of families relieved is 15. This relief is largely in the nature of gratuitous medical treatment, by the Medical Officer of the Guardians.

Poor Law Relief for the year amounted to £178 19s. 2d.

II. GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA.

1. SUMMARY of NURSING ARRANGEMENTS, HOSPITALS and other Institutions available for the District.

Cottage Hospital.—There is a Cottage Hospital, with 7 beds, operating theatre, X-ray, and out-patient department. This is supported mainly by voluntary contributions, and partly by fees charged to patients. A nurse in the Hospital also does general nursing in the district.

Hospital for Infectious Diseases.—A joint area for this purpose was formed in 1917 by the Urban Districts of Lyme Regis and Bridport and the Rural District of Beaminster. The hospital is at Bridport and has 20 beds, in addition to additional temporary accommodation for the reception of small-pox cases. The hospital is supported to the extent of one-fifth by the Borough Council. A motor ambulance is available at the hospital for removing infectious cases.



Maternity and Children's Welfare (Consultation).—A centre was formed in the town in 1918. The midwife and health visitor attend once a week, and a member of the County Council Medical Staff once a month.

2. PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF.

(a) Medical Officer of Health. (b) Sanitary Inspector, who is also Borough Surveyor. Both are part-time appointments. Half the salary of each officer is contributed by Exchequer grants. The Sanitary Inspector has also been appointed inspector under the Public Health (Meat) Regulations, 1924.

3. NURSING IN THE AREA.

Midwives.—One certified midwife resides in the town and attends maternity cases. She is subsidised by the County Council, and frequently employs a certified assistant.

Health Visitor.—There is a whole-time Health Visitor employed by the County Council for an area which includes Lyme Regis, Charmouth, Whitechurch Canonicorum, Monkton Wyld and Sherborne.

4. LABORATORY WORK.

Pathological and bacteriological examinations are carried out by the Clinical Research Association, by contract. Diphtheria antitoxin is provided gratis by the Council in necessitous cases.

5. LEGISLATION IN FORCE.

Adoptive Acts.—Public Health Amendment Act, 1890, part 3. Public Health Amendment Act, 1907, parts 3, 4 and 5. Building Bye-laws, adopted 9th May, 1923.

III. SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

1. WATER.

The town is supplied with water from two sources, both of which are derived from the greensand in the hills N.E. and N.W. of the centre of the Borough. The older source is from the spring at Colway, near the Railway Station, 250 feet above sea level. The water is conveyed by a 3 inch iron pipe to a reservoir near Kent Cottage, and thence into the town. This water is of excellent quality; 10° hardness; it has little corrosive action on iron pipes. In 1896 an additional supply from Nellie Brown and Twenty Acre Coppice Springs, which are situated about 2 miles from the town, was added. A reservoir was built near the springs 315 feet above sea level, from which water is conveyed to the Cobb in 4 inch iron pipes. This water is of excellent quality, but is softer, 4° of hardness, and has a corroding action on iron pipes. The whole of the main had to be scraped during 1924. The possibilities of contamination at both sources are very remote.

A small part of the higher part of the town, consisting almost entirely of high-class property, is above the level of water supply, and is dependent on wells.

The water supply of recent years has been increasingly inadequate, owing to the larger amount of water used per head since the more general use of bathrooms and flushing closets, to new buildings, and to the annual influx of visitors during the summer months. A scheme was prepared in 1924 to obtain water from a large spring at Yawl, together with the provision of a pumping station enabling the highest parts of the town to be supplied with water. This scheme has unfortunately been dropped during the present year, owing to difficulties as regards the purchase price of the necessary water rights.

A firm of engineers has recently been empowered to examine and report on other sources for a further supply.

2. RIVERS AND STREAMS.

The River Lym, a small stream, flows from N. to S. in the valley through the town, into the sea.

3. DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

The present system of drainage dates from 1903. It consists of two parts, one for the town, and the other for the Cobb districts. The sewerage is now conveyed directly into the sea.

Repairs were undertaken during the year to the sewer in Church Street in the lower part of the town. This has since worked satisfactorily. An extension of this sewer for about 100 yards up the Charmouth Road has also been carried out.

4. CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

The general type of closet is the flushing water closet. There are about 320 cottages in the town, and about 300 of these have W.C. accommodation. The remainder are mostly isolated cottages on the outskirts, and have cesspits, or earth closets, or chemical closets.

5. SCAVENGING.

This is carried out by the men and carts of the Council thrice weekly in the town, and twice weekly in the outside districts. The refuse is tipped in a field near the edge of the cliff, three quarters of a mile beyond the outskirts of the town.

6. SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA.

Sanitary Inspector's Statement:—

No. of inspections, 249.	No. of informal notices, 11.
No. complied with, 11	No. of statutory notices, 1
	Complied with, 1

7. PREMISES CONTROLLED BY BYE-LAWS.

There is one common lodging-house in the town, which is extremely well managed.

iv. HOUSING.

1. GENERAL HOUSING CONDITIONS

There is an estimated shortage of thirty houses.

As a beginning plans for the erection, by the Council, of eight houses, in two blocks of four, are ready, and these houses are expected to be ready for occupation in the summer of 1926. These will fill the vacant land owned already by the Council. Steps are being taken to select and purchase a further site on which more houses may be erected.

2. OVERCROWDING is not marked.

3. FITNESS OF HOUSES.

(a) The general standard is low. The houses are old and sited generally with no regard to neighbouring property, or access.

(b) The defects are principally due to age and damp. Stone floors are general, and none of the older houses have any damp course in the walls. A few are built directly against excavations in the hill side.

Most of the minor defects are repaired on receipt of informal notice. Major repairs involving tenants leaving the house can only be carried out after long delay owing to the absence of alternative accommodation.

4. BYE-LAWS.

The existing bye-laws work well, and will prevent any extension of the present low standard in housing.

5. HOUSING STATISTICS.

1. **Unfit Dwelling-houses.**—(1) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects under the Public Health or Housing Acts, and the Housing (Inspection of District), Regulations, 1910, 121. (2) Number of Dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation, 1. (3) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation, 11.

2 **Remedy of Defects without Service of Formal Notices.**—Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authorities or their Officers, 11.

3. Action under Statutory Powers.

A.—Proceedings under section 28 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c., Act, 1919. (1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs, 1. (2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit:—(a) by owners, 1; (b) by Local Authority in default of owners, 0. (3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by owners of intention to close, 0.

B.—Proceedings under Public Health Acts. Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied, 0.

C.—Proceedings under sections 17 and 18 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c., Act, 1909. (1) Number of representations made with a view to the making of Closing Orders, 1. (2) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made, 0. (3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the dwelling-houses have been rendered fit, 0. (4) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made, 0. (5) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders, 0.

V. INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

(a) **Milk Supply.**—This is excellent. Practically the whole of the milk supply is produced in or close to the area.

(i) **Dairies, Cow-sheds and Milk-shops**—There are six cow-sheds, four of them with dairies under the same management, and one milk-shop. They are inspected quarterly, and kept in good order.

(ii.) **Tuberculous Milk.**—The absence of surgical tuberculosis is evidence of the purity of the milk supply in this regard. Owing to the mildness of the climate cattle are kept in the open both summer and winter, and accordingly are very free from disease.

(iii.)—There are no producers of certified or Grade A milk. None of the milk producers have a sufficiently large sale to enable them to comply economically with the provisions necessary for its supply. No milk is pasteurised in the area.

(b) Meat.

(i.) **Meat Inspection.**—128 inspections were made by the Sanitary Inspector. No arrangements have been made for the marking of meat.

(ii.)—Stalls and Shops are inspected quarterly, but no proceedings have been found necessary under the Public Health (Meat) Regulations, 1924.

(iii.)—There are no public slaughter-houses.

(iv.)—Private slaughter-houses registered :

In 1920, 3. In Jan., 1925, 3. In Dec., 1925, 3.

These are inspected frequently, and are kept in good sanitary condition, but are badly situated, being too near dwelling-houses.

(c) Other Foods.

Bake-houses.—There are four of these, all situated above ground, and well kept. Inspected quarterly.

(d) **Sale of Food and Drugs Acts.**—This is administered by the County Council. The following samples were taken during the year. No cases of adulteration were found. Borax, 1; Bread, 2; Cream, 1; Tinned Fruit, 1; Potted Meat, 1; Milk, 2; Mincemeat, 1; Rhubarb Powder, 1; Sugar, 1; Tapioca, 1.

VI. PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

1. NOTIFIABLE DISEASES, OTHER THAN TUBERCULOSIS.

There has been one case only, viz. Scarlet Fever. This case was admitted to Bridport Joint Isolation Hospital, and recovered.

2. NON-NOTIFIABLE DISEASE.

Influenza of a mild type, with no deaths, was prevalent in February, March, and April. There is still much ignorance among the population as to the infectious nature of influenza, but this is steadily lessening with each annual outbreak, especially among the younger generation.

There was a large outbreak of measles during the summer months, mostly during the summer school holiday. There have only been isolated cases for several years, hence a large proportion of the child population was unprotected. The epidemic was of a mild type with few complications or sequelae, and no deaths.

3. TUBERCULOSIS.

New Cases, Pulmonary.

Age Periods.	Male.	Female.
15 to 25 years	1	0
25 to 35 years	0	2
35 to 45 years	0	0
45 to 55 years	1	1
	—	—
Total	2	3
Non-Pulmonary—none.		
Deaths	—none.	

vii. PORT SANITARY AUTHORITY.

No ships entered or left the port during the year.

viii. FACTORIES, WORKSHOPS AND WORKPLACES.

1. INSPECTIONS.

Factories	5.	Written Notices	0.
Workshops	13.	„	„ 0.

2. DEFECTS.

Sanitary Accommodation defective, 2. Remedied, 2.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

P. N. COOK,

M.O.H.

March, 1926.

